



APACS

Association of Program
Administrators for
CSTEP and STEP, Inc.

**Testimony to the New York State Senate Finance and
Assembly Ways and Means Committees Higher Education Hearing**

February 2, 2024
Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York

On behalf of the 119 CSTEP and STEP projects throughout New York State and the over 23,000 students they serve, thank you for convening this hearing.


First, I would like to thank the Legislature for its leadership in restoring cuts to all of the opportunity programs for this fiscal year. Your continued support of CSTEP and STEP students in Independent, SUNY, and CUNY four-year and two-year colleges and universities is greatly appreciated.

The proposed Executive Budget for FY2025 calls for a 3% reduction in funding for CSTEP and STEP. APACS requests a restoration to the reduction in funding along with an increase of 20%, or 7.5 million, for FY25 to support ongoing efforts to:

- Stabilize and strengthen the pipeline to STEM, health, and licensed fields from middle school to high school and college.
- Support STEM students with research and internship experiences proven to be critical, high-impact practices for retention and successful entry to targeted fields.
- Expand existing summer program components to bridge academic and non-academic gaps for precollege students and undergraduates.
- Assist STEM students with increasingly expensive instructional supplies and equipment required to successfully complete their coursework.
- Fully respond to our students' post-COVID educational, professional, and socio-emotional needs.

With additional funding to support the high-impact practices our programs are known for, the strength of the pipeline that produces professionals entering STEM, health, and licensed fields will be strengthened substantially.

The Legislature does have a history of recognizing the work of our programs as highly effective and efficient when additional funding expanded the network by 21 new projects three years ago. However, the distribution of funds was handcuffed by a 2014 funding formula, thus limiting the relief. For example, in 2014, when the funding formula was created, the statewide hourly wage



was \$8.75 per hour. In 2024 the minimum wage is now \$15.00 statewide and \$16.00 in New York City.

The critical, high-impact practices our programs employ in providing direct support – academic advising and professional development – along with a community to students that facilitates a sense of belonging on campuses and within the majors they are pursuing. Research has proven that communities like the one we provide inspire students to persevere and retain them in highly rigorous programs of study.

Governor Hochul’s vision to make New York a Tech Hub and a national leader fabricating semi-conductors as part of the Green CHIPS Program with Micron creates 50k new jobs. STEP and CSTEP alums will fill these jobs! The Governor’s signature Executive Budget Proposals - to Transform and Strengthen Healthcare Delivery and make New York a leader in the artificial intelligence revolution with the Empire AI Consortium - amplify the value and heighten the need for empathic, well-trained healthcare professionals and a highly skilled workforce to fill these jobs. STEP and CSTEP develop the workforce!

As intervention models, for nearly 40 years, CSTEP and STEP have been recognized as national leaders in preparing and directing historically underrepresented or economically disadvantaged students to careers in STEM, health, and licensed fields. We are recipients of the National Science Foundation Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring. Several projects have been recognized individually for their excellent work with the Inspiring Programs in STEM Awards given by the INSIGHT into Diversity publication. We are among the most effective and efficient educational programs in New York State.

The following data illustrate the success of our programs during the past three years - 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023:

CSTEP

- Student enrollment increased approximately 10-18% each year.
- 3,077 students have participated in research activities over the last three years
 - A total of 443,386 research hours
- 2,701 students have participated in internship activities over the last three
 - A total of 476,951 internship hours
- In 2022-2023, 9,020 students were serviced by the 63 CSTEP projects in New York.



STEP

- Student enrollment increased by approximately 10-15% each year.
- 2,954 students have participated in research activities over the last three years
 - A total of 110,753 research hours
- 922 students have participated in internship activities over the last three years
 - A total of 62,764 internship hours
- In 2022-2023, 14,080 students were serviced by the 56 STEP projects in New York.

As effective pipeline programs that help New York State address the needs for a workforce of STEM, health, and licensed professionals, we ask for your investment to ensure students are resourced and supported adequately in their academic and professional pursuits.

Respectfully submitted,

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